Minister, Mr. Igor Rogachev who had visited Delhi recently; and

(b) whether there is any change in the Soviet Union's attitude towards India because of the drastic change in its relationship with the United States and its own internal problems?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) Both sides reviewed bilateral relations in different fields and exchanged views on global issues.

(b) Traditionally close and friendly Indo-Soviet ties have been steadily developing over the years. Mr. Rogachev conveyed the Soviet Union's commitment to further strengthening our multifaceted cooperation to mutual benefit.

Developing Inland Waterways

*156. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop Inland Waterways in a way so as to reduce fuel consumption;

(b) if so, the details of the Inland Waterways to be developed;

(c) whether Government have asked the Shipping Corporation of India to submit a plan in this regard immediately;

(d) whether the Shipping Corporation of India has since submitted its plan to Government; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The IWT is an energy efficient mode of Transport.

(b) At present, decision exists for the development of the following waterways as National Waterways;

(i) Allahabad-Haldia stretch of the Ganga-Bhagirathi Hooghly river system which was declared as a National Waterway on 27-10-86.

(ii) Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of the river Brahmaputra which was declared as a National Waterway on 26-12-88.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Steps against noise pollution in the cities

*157. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to take to meet the alarming noise pollution in our cities and damage to health as brought out in the Indian Express dated 23rd September, 1990;

(b) whether it is a fact that even the silence zones near Hospitals are no longer being observed in the Capital; and

(c) whether any detailed studies have been carried out in India on the health problems created by noise and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY): (a) The steps taken by Government for environmental noise control include:

(i) Ambient air quality standards in respect of noise have been prescribed for Industrial, Commercial, Residential and Silence Zones; separate limits have been set for day and night time. Noise limits have also been prescribed for automobiles, domestic appliances and construction equipment at the manufacturing stage. Noise limits for automobiles have to be achieved by 1992, while those for other equipment are to be achieved by 1993.

(ii) Guidelines for permissible noise exposure for industrial workers have been laid down.

(iii) Code of practice for controlling noise from sources other than industries and automobiles have been evolved by the Central Pollution control Board. These include public

address systems, aircraft operations, railway operations, construction activities and bursting of crackers.

(v) Monitoring of ambient noise levels for seven cities namely, Delhi, Jaipur, Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kanpur and Calcutta has been carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board.

(b) Breach of prescribed standards does occur.

(c) The Indian Council for Medical Research has conducted a study on Prevelence and Aetiology of Hearing Impairment. A total of 11,665 persons were examined in rural areas and 10,935 persons in urban areas at four centres i.e., Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and Trivandrum. The study indicates that population working in noisy areas for more than 10 years was found to have an increased prevelence of hearing loss in comparison to those who have worked for lesser number of years.

टेलीफोन उपभोक्ता संगठनों द्वारा दिये गये सुझाव

*158. **सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा :**
श्री राम जेठमलानी :

क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 30 जनवरी, 1991 के 'फाइनेंशियल एक्सप्रेस' में "कंज्युमर ग्रुप्स फेवर प्राइवेटाइजेशन" शीर्षक के अन्तर्गत प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या यह सच है कि विभिन्न शहरों के टेलीफोन उपभोक्ता संगठनों ने वर्तमान टेलीफोन प्रणाली के संबंध में शिकायतें की हैं और इस संबंध में कुछ सुझाव भी दिये हैं ;

(ग) क्या सरकार ने इन सुझावों के संबंध में कोई निर्णय लिये हैं; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ?

संचार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (डा० संजय सिंह) : (क) जी, हां।

(ख) और (ग) प्रचालन एवं विकास संबंधी जरूरतों, उपभोक्ता की आवश्यकताओं तथा वित्तीय विवक्षाओं आदि को ध्यान में रखते हुए दूरसंचार विभाग के लिये अति उपयुक्त संगठनात्मक ढांचा तैयार करने की सिफारिश देने के उद्देश्य से एक उच्चस्तरीय समिति का पहले ही गठन कर दिया गया है। समिति ने अभी अपनी रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करनी है।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Proposal to establish a cultural consulate of Portugal in Goa

*159. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received any proposal from the Government of Portugal to establish a Cultural Consulate in Goa to promote cultural activities there; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) The Portuguese Government has expressed interest in setting up a Cultural Centre at Goa.

(b) The matter is under discussion between the two sides on the basis of the standard guidelines of the Government of India and in terms of Article 54 of the Indo-Portuguese Cultural Exchange Programme for the year 1990—92.

Iraqi response to peace efforts

*160. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports appearing in the Press on January 15, 1991 to the